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To make effective use of teaching talent for a differentiated teaching staff, a four-level structure based on levels of responsibility offers many advantages. Teachers at the top two levels would be hired under 12-month contracts, teachers at the bottom two levels under 10-month contracts. Essential to such a plan would be a maximum salary at the top teaching level ($18,000 a year is suggested) that is at least double that at the lowest ($7,500 is suggested), direct teaching responsibility for teachers at all levels, and innovation and reorganization of basic school structure. Each school, however, will have to work out the particulars of differentiated staffing to meet local needs and conditions. (SG)

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THE TEACHER AND HIS STAFF • OCCASIONAL PAPERS / NO. 1

A DIFFERENTIATED STAFF: PUTTING TEACHING TALENT TO WORK

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Considering all the talk in education today
about meeting the individual needs of students,
attention to individual differences among teachers is
long overdue. Common sense tells us that the needs of the
student unlucky enough to sit out the year in a
math class taught by an incompetent
teacher are not being met,
to say nothing of the needs of the teacher, who may be highly
competent to plan a new algebra course or who may be a master at
small group instruction. Neither the student,
the teacher, nor education is served by
staffing patterns that allow this
kind of thing to happen. It happens because we staff
schools as though differences in teacher ability
don't exist or don't matter if they do.

Under these illogical circumstances,
endurance becomes the only logical criterion
for rewarding teachers, and so we reward them with tenure
and a pay scale based on longevity.
In staffing schools we ignore the educational needs
of most students, and the professional aspects of teaching.

If the case seems overstated, it is because
the waste that results can scarcely be overstated.
A great many of the most talented teachers are quitting
or accepting promotions away from students and
into administration to get more status
or more money, or simply to find
some outlet for their talent and enthusiasm.
More students than we would like to admit are failing or dropping
out because fate (certainly not planning) has unwittingly

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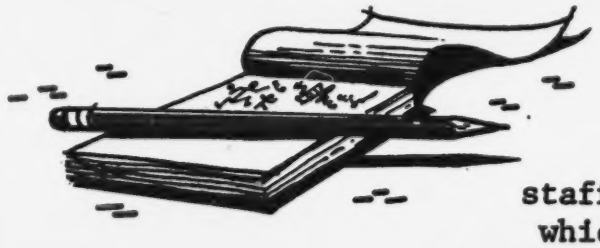
placed in the classroom next door the teacher who might have encouraged them to continue school. Good money follows bad as more teachers are hired to make up for the inefficient use of teaching talent hidden but on hand.
Innovation that does not fit the interchangeable-parts pattern of teacher assignment now used dies stillborn, whatever its potential. The malady is obvious and the list of symptoms long. Merit pay and other proposals aimed at removing symptoms are threatening to compound the waste.

If the way we staff public schools doesn't make sense and is so terribly wasteful, why don't we abandon it? I suggest we do just that, fully aware that the journey from the certainty of the disease to the uncertainty of the cure will be at times perilous and never easy. To me, and I hope to most thinking educators, the certainty of the disease should be motivation enough.



A FOUR LEVEL-STRUCTURE

Fundamental to the differentiated teaching staff I propose is a four-level structure within which both the levels and the kinds of teaching responsibility can be assigned and rewarded in keeping with identified educational functions and professional needs. Under the plan (which I have no reason to believe offers the ultimate answer to all the problems just described), teachers at the top two levels of responsibility would be hired on a 12-month contract and those at the bottom two levels on the same 10-month contract and under the same tenure rules as teachers are hired now. Senior staff members, for purposes of illustration called Professors and Senior Teachers, would represent no more and usually less than 25 percent of the total staff and could not hold tenure in these positions other than that for which their annual performance qualified them. They might hold tenure, however, at the two lower levels, labeled here as Staff Teachers and Associate Teachers.

Despite what the labels might imply, I am not suggesting a new bureaucracy or a hierarchy that gives recognition to an elite. I am suggesting a structure based on levels of

responsibility in a teaching organization that takes its overall shape from what needs to be done educationally, now and in the future, in a given school, from what teachers are available and best qualified to be responsible for the tasks identified.
This, of course, presupposes a differentiation of tasks far beyond what the interchangeable-parts pattern has so far allowed. Considering the number of practical educational innovations now standing in the wings waiting for such an opening, this "new tasks" dimension should not surprise anyone.

Taking educational policy making out of the hands of the administrative hierarchy and sharing it among the most talented teachers is just one major objective of the differentiated staff concept. In this as in other respects it has no educational precedent, a fact worth noting by those who think it will be easy.

Professors and Senior Teachers, as members of a school cabinet chaired by the principal (also a Professor), would seek full authority from the school board and the superintendent to formulate new educational policy; to make decisions as to what educational functions should be served, how they should be served, and by whom they should be carried out; and in general to govern the school as an autonomous body. This does not mean the cabinet would not seek outside help. On the contrary, it would seek and get the kind of help in introducing constructive change that schools have been cut off from up to now.

I do not know, in specific terms, what the Professor at the top of a salary range rising to $18,000 per year would be doing that would make him worth that much more than an Associate Teacher at the top of a salary range rising to $7,500. I do not know because no one in the profession has implemented such a proposal. To find out we must look past failures in education full in the face and open the system wide enough to admit solutions that get to the root of the problem. I foresee incompetents approaching that high figure on the basis of longevity alone, and we can point to talented teachers easily worth $18,000 a year

who left teaching long before coming close to $7,500. Investigations have established that a salary range of $5,800 to $18,000 could be accommodated within typical existing school budgets. In terms of educational returns, we are already paying more for less.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The fact is that I do not want to know, in specific terms and a priori, what the Professor, Senior Teacher, Staff Teacher, and Associate Teacher will do. If I said the Professor would have a Ph.D., would be responsible for shaping the curriculum, researching new instructional techniques, and investigating new modes of learning, I might well be right in fact but wrong by omission. The same might be true if I said that the Senior Teacher would often be a department head, hold a master's degree, and be responsible for making the concepts and goals of the curriculum explicit for a given course or grade level.

The Staff Teacher then would be the most likely person to translate curriculum units and goals into highly teachable lesson plans and, along with Associate Teachers, to assume the major responsibility for carrying them out. I say major responsibility, because in the differentiated staff, no teacher at any level should be entirely cut off from teaching responsibility.

In a general sense, the foregoing examples describe teaching responsibilities at the various levels as I perceive them. More important, however, they imply the framework within which educational tasks will be identified and assigned. A priori job descriptions for the Professor, Senior Teacher, Staff Teacher, and Associate Teacher could easily obviate the purpose of the differentiated staff concept by denying that differentiation is a dynamic principle to be applied over a period of time to roles within each level of responsibility and to specific functions within individual teaching roles. When the occasion and his particular skills demand it, a Professor might spend some time on remedial work with a small group that might normally be handled by

a Staff or Associate Teacher. An Associate Teacher with special knowledge or otherwise obtainable skill might be the principal lecturer in some in-service training program for senior staff. It is by such exceptions rather than by rules that the differentiated staff concept would prove itself valid.

Any proposal to employ teaching talent where it will do the most good must recognize that much of it is now being wasted at the ditto machine, monitoring the lunchroom, taking roll, and doing other jobs for which professional ability and salary are unnecessary. In addition, persons with technical skills common in industry but new to education are becoming increasingly essential to school teaching staffs. Both economy and necessity recommend that the differentiated school staff include an expanded nonteaching category of classified personnel to handle clerical functions.

Within this nonteaching category, as in the professional category, assignments should match responsibility with talent and competence. In the absence of a teacher, a bright clerical assistant familiar with the program and acting as a substitute would be more likely to sustain class progress in a course than a substitute teacher brought in from the outside. A technician's proposal in a school cabinet meeting could conceivably change the direction of a failing audiovisual program to one of success.

Despite the plentiful examples of resistance to change, I contend that teachers will willingly innovate and experiment in a context in which responsibility does not exceed competence and in which competence is mobilized and rewarded. So far, innovation has tended to come from outside--usually brought in by some expert--and appended as a trial balloon, easily cut loose when it doesn't work by itself or whenever it becomes a nuisance. Where there has been an enlightened administration and teaching staff dedicated to improving the quality of education in the school and looking for a way to do it, innovation has brought remarkable results. When it has failed under these circumstances, it has been a failure qualified by a wholehearted attempt. The fact that such

attempts have been made and the examples of outstanding success should persuade us all that, throughout the public school system, both the talent and the willingness to use it do exist. Experience with implementing flexible scheduling convinces me that, within the differentiated staff, such talent would be many times more viable.

I expect that teachers worn by years of mediocrity to fit smooth and tight in the existing interchangeable pattern will resist being jarred loose from a comfortable staff structure. It is possible that there will be some initial expense in securing cooperation, or at least compliance, from old guard elements by grandfather rights where the incentives of the differentiated system seem threatening. If so, it will be a cheap price to pay for liberalizing existing talent and for a staffing system that attracts and retains the most qualified professionals. I do not believe hostility to a staffing pattern based on professional opportunity and just reward could be sustained for long.

ADVANTAGES OF THE DIFFERENTIATED STAFF

The potential advantages of the differentiated teaching staff probably best describe present shortcomings, the urgent need for change, and the untapped promise within the profession. The following are a few direct and indirect advantages that I anticipate:

. When positions are identified delineating what needs to be done and are assigned on the basis of competence, there will be a basis of salary differentiation on which school boards, administrators, and teachers can agree.

. Good teachers, who deserve as much money as administrators, will be able to afford a career in classroom teaching.

. There will be a place for those teachers for whom no amount of money can make up for the lack of job satisfaction.

. There will be a place for talented teachers who want only limited professional responsibility (e.g., the teaching housewife).

. Teachers will be able to take postgraduate courses to make themselves more competent in their specific jobs instead of taking courses on an indiscriminate units-equal-dollars basis.

. Better teachers put to better use would put the teacher shortage in proper perspective.

. Longevity, with all its educationally crippling effects, would cease to be a criterion for promotion.

. In-service teacher training could be an internal program aimed at solving problems at hand rather than problems perceived by someone once or twice removed from the school's student population.

. Supervision would emphasize direction and guidance from fellow teachers with demonstrated ability rather than evaluation only.

. Evaluation could be based on real knowledge from intimate contact and cooperation between teaching professionals.

. Many existing problems in negotiating salaries and existing differences between professional teachers and administrators should disappear in a staff wherein status derives from performance and competence.

. Young talent (these days often the best informed) would be encouraged to grow.

. The school would regain some control over apportioning dollars now committed to perpetuating the median rise in salary costs brought about by tenure, longevity, and automatic promotion practices.

. Colleges could begin to focus on training teachers to handle specific responsibilities and specific teaching skills.

. Counseling and interpersonal student-teacher relationships could be established at more profound levels of personal choice and personal relevance.

. The best talent would be free to seek the best alternative teaching techniques, learning modes, and innovations in general through persistent liaison with colleges, universities, and other schools.

I do not presume that the differentiated staff is the answer to all the problems in education today or even to all those implied by the potential advantages just listed. I do say that existing staff and salary patterns create a context in which the most pressing problems are very difficult if not impossible to attack. The differentiated staff structure, open-ended to functions identified and to identifying new functions, brings educational decision making and problem solving back to the point of contact between pupil and teacher, where all education ultimately must find its meaning.

ESSENTIALS OF DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING

Although the differentiated staff structure might be arranged on a number of basic patterns other than the four levels suggested here, three conditions are essential:

. A minimum of three differentiated staff teaching levels, each having a different salary range.

. A maximum salary at the top teaching category that is at least double *the maximum at the lowest.*

. Substantial direct teaching responsibility for all teachers at all salary levels, including those in the top brackets.

Simply inventing responsibility levels, writing job descriptions, and assigning teachers arbitrarily will not work because that is essentially what we are doing now. The differentiated staff concept calls for innovation and reorganization of the basic structure of our schools, with full participation in such reorganization by the teaching staff. Ideally, the state or private organizations should provide incentive funds to defray any initial implementation costs that might occur in revising instructional materials, facilities, and equipment.

TEMPLE CITY, CALIFORNIA

The Temple City Unified School District in California is now in the midst of a project of developing a differentiated staff structure for a K-12 school, a project made possible by a Kettering Foundation grant. What has always been considered the greatest obstacle to achieving such a staff has been obviated by the initiative taken by the Temple City teaching staff and the enthusiastic support provided by the school board and the school district administration.

Temple City expects its new teaching organization will be operational by September 1968. So far, thirteen academic departments have been reorganized into six new departments, each with a Senior Teacher serving as coordinator. If the budget allows, an unaffiliated Senior Teacher, or Professor, will be included who will be free of any specific administrative responsibility. The tentative reorganization, it appears, will allow an expanded and in many instances completely redesigned curriculum to be taught with about twelve fewer teachers than are now employed. There are high hopes that the example this school will set will be worth emulating. It will not be an example to copy, however, since every school will have to define its own problems and seek solutions that are uniquely its own.

RATIONAL CHANGE

I do not expect investigations into teacher staffing problems to result in any standard format for staff reorganization. I do expect that the standard format now in use eventually will collapse under its own inadequacies and the new demands for better education. The pressures being placed upon education to accept more responsibility for the future of society leave no room for comfortable mediocrity, and the issue is fast becoming a simple one of whether change will be compulsive or rational. It is time to accept our obligation to be rational by building a professional teaching staff organization under which learning can occur by design rather than by accident.

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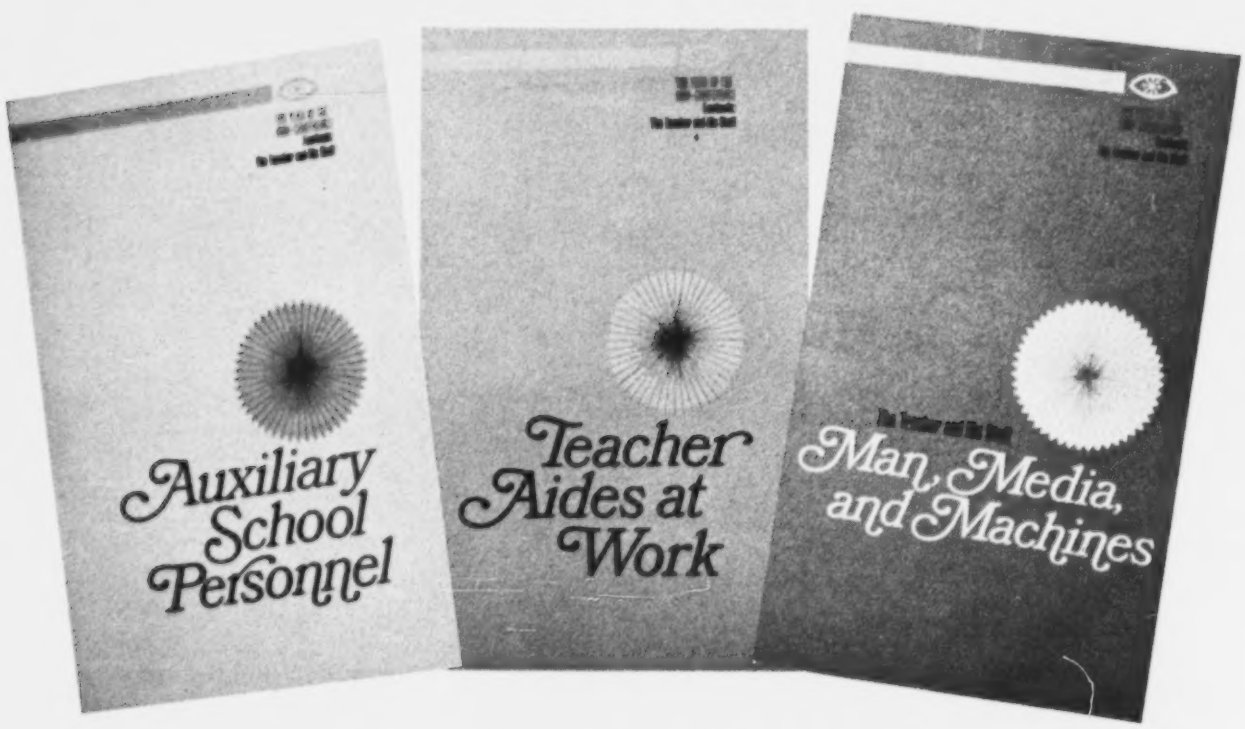

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